



HOT NEWS

Autumn 2007

*Ripping some curls,
With the...*

Water Skills Team!



Also inside:

New Recruitment Plans

Bravery and long service awards

WFG08 - have you registered yet?



Guest Foreword

My name is Wayne Woods and I am a firefighter at Kirkby Green Watch. This is my 13th year with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

During my time I have obviously seen many changes. One of the things that has been positive is the strengthened links with the local community. I've been running a youth project close to my heart - a youth football team. The kids involved are a great bunch of lads, all from the Knowsley area. I'm really pleased that MF&RS is now backing this work through sponsorship. You can read more about what's been happening with the team on page 26 and find out why their success is now causing me a headache!

Also in this edition of Hot News is the spotlight on long service and bravery, catch up on what our crews did during the floods, how our young people got on during the Tall Ships Race and have a look at the photos and comment from operational incidents (see just what incidents your station went to on page 16).

It's always good to read what colleagues across the service are up to, so if you have any news that you can share, email Hotline.

Wayne Woods



CONTENTS

All aboard for training	3
Bravery and long service awards	4
New recruitment drive	7
Life as a new recruit	8
Operational News	9
Water, water everywhere!	11
Spotlight on Southport	13
Water skills training launched	15
Table of ops incidents	16
TADA's window to world	17
New partnership brings in 15,000 HFSCs	18
Eyes down for CFS	19
Station links with local youths	20
New van that's just cool!	21
Looking back	22
Ex-members news	23
Life on the Ocean Wave	24
Football	26
WFG news	27



Blazing Paddles

Firefighters joined the Royal Navy for a tactical exercise on board HMS Mersey. The 1,700 tonne River Class fishery protection vessel was in the Mersey for four days following an intensive period of operations in the Irish Sea.

The ship's Captain contacted MF&RS to see if it was possible to do a joint exercise whilst they were back in the area - the first time in 30 years that such an exercise has been carried out. MF&RS was invited to join the ship for a training exercise designed to test both parties on their capabilities and firefighting priorities. There was then a final exercise with members of the ship's company fighting a pretend 'fire' and the firefighters conducting a search and rescue operation for injured crewmen in smoke filled compartments.

Station Manager Simon Woodward said: "We get the chance to visit vessels when they are here but it's not often that we get the chance to exercise with the personnel on board, so this was quite unique."

Crews from Kirkdale, Birkenhead and Croxteth attended, along with the Incident Management Team, and they were joined by the Royal Naval teams on board, including their fire teams.

They were faced with the scenario of a fire involving oil in a compartment below the aft quarter deck - the steering gear compartment. Three people were unaccounted for.

Lieutenant Jason Varty, the ship's Executive Officer said: "As

sailors we are trained in basic firefighting skills - the priority being to safeguard the crew and the ship if a fire breaks out when you're off shore and far from help. These firefighters are the experts in their field and do this job everyday."

The Fire Service and Naval staff were put into combined BA teams to carry out a search of the vessel below deck using guidelines whilst the Naval firefighting team suppressed and controlled the fire. The Search and Rescue boat was also deployed to locate casualties in the water.

SM Woodward added: "The exercise allowed us to test BA entry control and BA team communication procedures. It was really well received by all the different personnel involved. Everyone involved was able to see how each organisation worked and their inter-dependencies. The Royal Navy were also able to see some of our appliances and their equipment and how the incident management structure was set up."

Watch Manager Dave Griffiths from Kirkdale said: "It was a good exercise. We did a search and rescue exercise but we used naval personnel as part of our BA teams - there were two Firefighters and one Naval officer. That was good because they knew the layout of the ship and could tell us where different hatches led to. All of the Firefighters on the watch enjoyed the exercise. It was hard work but it was beneficial."

Both the Fire Service and HMS Mersey will be holding a debrief to see what can be learnt for the future and a further exercise is being planned for 2008.

Bravery and Long Service Awards



Firefighters who risked their lives to save others were the stars of the show at a special awards evening. A Gallantry and Long Service Awards Evening took place at FACT, Liverpool, with medals and certificates presented by the High Sheriff of Merseyside, Professor Philip Love.

The celebration recognised staff who had gone over and above the call of duty or who had completed at least 20 years of service with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. This is the first time in a number of years that such a ceremony has taken place and the organisation says it is the first of a regular series of celebratory events marking the commitment of staff. Around 200 people attended the event that was organised by Watch Manager Pete Owens and Magda Jordan from Corporate Communications.

Those staff receiving the Queen's Long Service and Good Conduct Medal were: Tracy Bartley (formerly MACC, now HQ); John Breckell (Whiston); Mark Clarke (RRT); Jane Clarry (MACC); John Davies (Birkenhead); Keith Dykes (HQ); Phil Ellis (Wallasey); John Fitzsimmons (St Helens); David Hughes (Toxteth); Gary Kay (Birkenhead); Tony Lynott (HQ); Jim Martin (IMT); Paul Moss (Belle Vale); Daryl Oprey (HQ); Robert Paton (Kirkdale); Ian Reid (HQ); Bill Speedy (HQ); Steve Tempest (Kirkdale); and Ian Voce (HQ).

Non-uniformed staff were presented with an internal long service award: Sue Abbott, Nyree Collinson; Philomena Dwyer; Magda Jordan; Lin Morrison and Judy Murphy.

The evening also celebrated acts of gallantry that have

been carried out not only by Fire Service staff but members of the public. Anyone in the service was able to nominate people for the award.

The River Rescue Team was awarded with a Team Commendation for the rescue of a woman who had become trapped in rising water underneath the old Liverpool landing stage. Team Leader Rob Eedle and Crewmen Alistair Knowles and Kevin Farnan found the woman around 30ft inside the structure pinned against an old timber beam by the tide.

Team Leader Rob Eedle formulated a rescue plan and dispatched rescue swimmer Kevin Farnan. Rob explained: "That area is fraught with hazards, not just because of the debris but the barnacles and sea life that have built up over the years are razor sharp. Kevin was dispatched on an extended reach rescue using a safety line but he couldn't release the female so Alistair was deployed as a second rescue swimmer.

"The extrication had to be quick because the woman was drifting in and out of consciousness. The two rescue swimmers worked well together and managed to bring her back to the boat conscious. She was very lucky."

An individual CFO Commendation was presented to Crewman Gary Fitzmaurice who rescued a youth who had fallen into the River Mersey near to the Woodside Ferry Terminal. The 15-year-old had fallen from the sea wall and due to the strong current he was soon in difficulty. Gary was deployed into the water and reached the boy, backed up by Team Leader Steve Carder and Crewman Mark Harding.

Gary was able to secure the boy and using the tidal flow to assist, both Gary and the boy were lowered on the floating line towards the River Launch.

Fire Crews from White Watch Low Hill were awarded a Chief Fire Officer's Commendation for the rescue of eight people from a 3-storey house in Burleigh Rd South, Anfield, on 25th April this year. Residents were left trapped after a fire in a ground floor flat that caused thick black smoke to

engulf the staircase. Firefighters rescued six people by ladder and led a further two to safety.

Steve Thomas was a Crew Manager at the time on the first attending appliance. He recalls: "It was a house of multi-occupancy and when we turned into the street there were dozens of people, large volumes of smoke and people hanging out of the windows and clinging to the chimney stacks on the roof."

A nine metre ladder was pitched to the roof to rescue those trapped and a short extension ladder was used to rescue people from the first floor windows. BA teams were then sent into the building to tackle the fire and do a full search.

Three members of the public received a special Gallantry award. Graham Duckworth, his son Chris Duckworth and Shaun Heath were involved in the rescue of an elderly lady from a house fire in Blackstock Court Netherton on 6th April this year. An 84-year-old became trapped in her property after a chip pan fire in her kitchen. The lady had attempted to put the fire out herself with water with disastrous consequences, as it turned the pan into a fire ball with the force knocking her over and causing an injury to her shoulder.

Her neighbours Graham and Chris attempted to get into the property through the front door but couldn't get in so went to the rear of the house. They forced their way in through the back door and were joined by Shaun. The kitchen was well alight, with smoke levels down to the floor. the trio could see the lady on the floor and fought through the smoke and flames to rescue her.



For Learning Not Burning

Firefighters from Belle Vale, Huyton, Allerton and Old Swan were called to Cross Farm County Primary School, Netherley, on August 29 where they found the building well alight.

Watch Manager Keith Woodhams said: "Someone had gained entry to the nursery section and set light to furniture in the building. The heat and flames caused the ceiling to collapse. Firefighters managed to contain the fire and stop it from spreading to other rooms and parts of the school."

Just weeks earlier crews from Bromborough attended the former Dell Primary where the roof space was well alight. The CPL helped fight the fire from the roof, as crews tackled it from the ground.

Steps have been taken to try and reduce the risks to schools. Arson Reduction Advocates do risk assessments and make recommendations to reduce the risk of fire – covering everything from access to the grounds to combustible materials on the site.

Work has also been done during the summer holiday following a successful pilot in Knowsley. Crews make checks to see if there are any signs of damage or children on the site.

Arson Reduction Advocate Karen Hughes said: "It's all about reducing the risk. If we can take that away by making schools more secure or removing combustible materials from the site it reduces the potential problems."



New Recruitment Drive

A new wave of uniformed recruitment is about to get underway, which is set to not only revolutionise the application process but also the training for new firefighters. MF&RS is looking at moving away from the traditional 13/14 week course to a new type of induction.

Along with time at the Training and Development Academy learning core skills, recruits will also be learning in the workplace, spending time with the different sections and departments so they get a thorough understanding of how the Service works. This will include everything from specialist teams such as River Rescue to the Community Safety Advocates and Youth Engagement.

ACFO Bill Evans explains why it is changing: "We are always looking at how things can be improved and this is a very exciting and new concept that we are looking to introduce. Our new firefighters in the future will be able to see how diverse the organisation is and the values that we hold. They will be able to appreciate the needs of the Service and the community and be able to help us to continue to provide an excellent service."

Recruits will develop an extensive portfolio during a 20-month induction which will not only be useful for their training but also for the NVQ that new firefighters are encouraged to complete.

In October, promotional adverts will be displayed, making use of key locations like public transport routes and the big screen in Clayton Square in the city centre. The adverts will direct people to apply online, as the Service is making full use of e-recruitment. The campaign, entitled Everyone Counts, is particularly aimed at minority groups who are currently under-represented in the uniformed Fire Service – such as women and ethnic minorities.

The new application process will include a values questionnaire

and psychometric tests which involve situational awareness, understanding information, working with numbers as well as a personality profile. Applicants will then complete a new style physical test, before an interview, medical and CRB checks. Awareness days will still be held to allow applicants to experience some elements of the tests and offer educational support.

Another big change could be staggered start dates for trainees. Rather than taking on 15-20 trainees on a single course, a bank of potential recruits is set up and start the induction in much smaller numbers so there is a continuous cycle of recruitment and training. The Service will be able to plan in advance how many new starters are needed to make-up for people who are retiring to help make the staffing process much more efficient.

ACFO Evans added: "It's a very exciting time to join MF&RS as a firefighter and we have never offered new recruits such a comprehensive development opportunity. We are looking forward to seeing this introduced with this new recruitment campaign."



Wirral Firefighters Adopt a Block

Firefighters in Wirral have introduced a new scheme to try and improve fire safety in high rise flats. Watches on station are now adopting the high rises in their area to build bridges with the residents who live there, encourage fire safety and improve familiarisation in case of operational incidents.

The scheme was thought up by Watch Manager Ian Girven in Community Fire Safety. Chris Benton from Wirral CFS said: "This is a partnership between ourselves, Fire Support Network and the crews on station and it's working really well. CFS

are putting a stand in the lobby to attract residents' attention and FSN are delivering leaflets, so we are generating HFSCs for the crews to carry out."

The first to be adopted was Sandbourne Heights in Moreton that was taken on by White Watch at Upton. Others soon followed as watches adopted Brooklands in Birkenhead; Fieldway Court in Birkenhead; Thornridge in Moreton; and Melrose in Moreton.

Station Manager Myles Platt explained: "It's a watch-based approach. The crews engage with the caretaker or the landlord

who lets residents know the Fire Service is working in the block. The firefighters can then carry out HFSCs, look at housekeeping such as the bin stores and inspect water supplies in case there is ever a fire in the block. There's also the potential for carrying out training exercises there. It all helps the crews become more familiar with the blocks so that if there is ever an incident they are more familiar with it. Of course there are benefits for the residents as well as we can try and help them with issues regarding the high rises."

Life as a New Recruit

Fay Disley joined Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service last year, after an intensive training course in which she emerged as the top scoring recruit. Now based at Croxteth Fire Station Fay is thoroughly enjoying her life as a firefighter.

She is still under development, with a few more months to complete of her NVQ, and Fay says she is enjoying every minute of her new role: "Life as a firefighter is absolutely great. It's everything I expected it to be and more, I haven't looked back since and I'm still enjoying every day."

After ten years working in retail Fay desired a more challenging and rewarding profession, so resolved to join the Fire Service. She applied four times to various services, including twice to her home town of Derbyshire, before finally being recruited by Merseyside.

Fay's determination finally paid off last year when she emerged as the highest scoring recruit on her training course, beating 16 others: "It really was a shock, I couldn't believe it and for the first time I was speechless!"

The recruits completed 17 weeks of training which was conducted in several stages, with weekly tests to check their progress. Fay says the first six weeks were the most difficult: "The most difficult thing was adapting to the change. It's a big adjustment from working within the corporate sector and I had to learn everything from scratch."

Now based at Croxteth Fay thoroughly enjoys working with the team: "I couldn't ask for a better team to work with, they were like a breath of fresh air when I joined."

She lists self pride, job satisfaction and teamwork as her favourite aspects of the job: "It's so rewarding being able to go home and know you've done a good job."



Youth Services Mentor is a First

Greater links are being forged with young people in St Helens through a groundbreaking new project that sees a firefighter becoming a mentor for the Council's Youth Services Department.

Following the success of the School Fire Liaison Officers, who have been embedded in schools across Merseyside, MF&RS has introduced Paul Dunn as a mentor to youths in the St Helens area. His new role will see him visit youth groups in the district to interact with young people aged 11-25 in a bid to breakdown barriers that might exist between them and the Fire Service.

Paul said: "I will be acting as a role model figure and explaining to them how the Fire Service works. I will be trying to talk them out of anti-social behaviour towards the Fire Service, such as making hoax calls, and will be trying to keep them off the streets by giving them something more positive to do with their time."



Paul, who has previously worked as an NVQ mentor, was nominated for the role by his Station and District Manager who were so impressed by his previous work with young people they felt he would be the ideal candidate for the job.

Paul is the first of Merseyside's firefighters to be embedded within a youth service and insists he is looking forward to the responsibility: "I know it's going to be a challenge, but it's something different and I like a change. I really am looking forward to it."

Group Manager John McCormack came up with the idea for the mentor scheme, in conjunction with Andy Dempsey who is St Helens Council's Head of Corporate and Community Safety.

He said: "The idea was to put in a role model that would operate within the Youth Services to bridge the gap between the work we do with youths and the work they do. So far the feedback has all been extremely positive."

Social Club Fire

Firefighters were called to a social club in Prescot that had been deliberately set alight. The first call was received at 7.20pm and when crews arrived at the scene in Scotchbarn Lane the single storey building was well alight.

The crew from Whiston was first at the scene. Watch Manager Mick Carter said: "As we were turning out towards the building we could see a large cloud of black smoke. There was one guy there from Warrington and he said he could see the smoke as far away as that. It was a large building and when we arrived we could see that it was well alight, it was going really well."

Appliances from Whiston, Huyton, St Helens, Eccleston, Old Swan and Birkenhead attended along with the Combined Platform Ladder from Liverpool City and the Incident Management Team.

WM Carter added: "The crews worked really hard. We were initially going to use the CPL to fight the fire from the air but we didn't need to in the end as the crews worked really well in the early stages and managed to get in and knock the fire down quickly. They did a really good job and stopped the fire from destroying the building completely."



Training Exercise That Was Right on Track!

Old Swan arranged a railway exercise at Picton rail sidings last month. Appliances from Old Swan, Low Hill, Toxteth, Allerton, Croxteth and the IMT attended. The exercise was a fire on board a passenger train with 20 people reported trapped on board and railway workers injured on the track. The incident was managed very well by crews involved with all people accounted for in 12 minutes. Railtrack staff were on hand to provide rail safety advice and assist the OICs with expert advice as the incident progressed. Special thanks to Mike Shipley from Alstrom Transport for allowing us to use the facilities at Picton sidings.



Fireman Sham

A man appeared in court last month under the new Emergency Services legislation, after he tried to pass himself off as a firefighter during the flood incidents.

Peter Jennings was charged in July after he travelled from his Kirkdale home to Gloucestershire where he spent three days working with crews during the flood relief efforts. He was dressed in a Merseyside uniform after stealing clothing and equipment and even drove to Tewkesbury with a flashing blue light. Once at the incident he directed pumps to a pub in the town, leaving Cheltenham short of an appliance.

His sham was only brought to light after he was recognised on the TV by someone from MF&RS who alerted police.

Jennings pleaded guilty to three charges of obstructing the fire service.

He is due back in court in November.

Water, Water Everywhere!

Torrential rain gave fire services across the country their biggest ever test as areas of the country were plunged into chaos. Flood warnings were issued across the UK as heavy rain battered much of England and Fire Services were deluged with calls for help.

A national Flood Co-ordination Centre was set up to ensure that the various resources around the UK were made available to those places most in need of support. The Centre was operating on a 24 hour basis and worked closely with the Environment Agency and members of the Public Weather Services' Advisory Team on strategic planning.

Nationwide there were thousands of people rescued and thousands of millions of gallons of water moved as fire and rescue services worked tirelessly to respond to the worst flooding the country has ever seen. Merseyside crews were drafted in to help with the relief efforts in various parts of the country, taking specialist equipment such as boats and high volume pumps to help with search and rescue, pumping out flood waters and strategic planning.

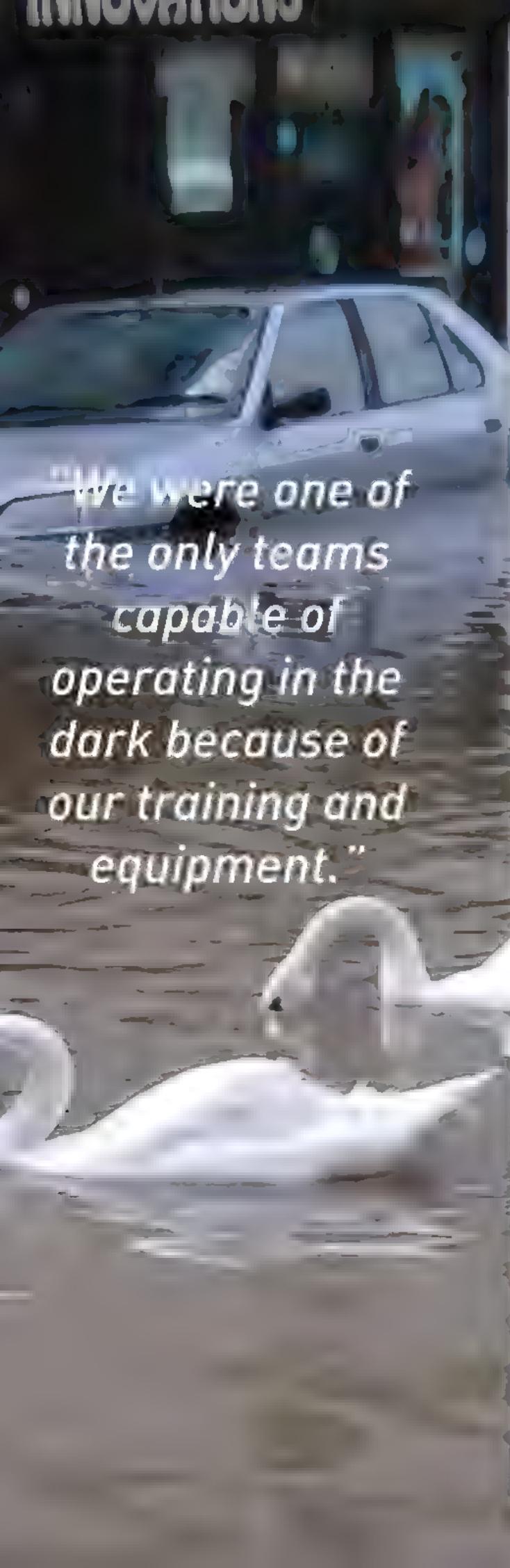
Mark Harding, crew member from the River Rescue Team was among those who attended in Worcestershire. He described the scene: "As we came off the motorway into the countryside, we were greeted by flooded land. It took your breath away. We hadn't expected the scale of it. We were passing wide open spaces of flood plains, of boats and fields and fast moving waters."

The first team who were deployed into Worcestershire arrived on site within three hours of being called on July 21. The Rivers Avon and Severn had burst their banks and water was fast moving causing major property damage, cutting off roads and trapping people in homes, work, hotels and vehicles.

Within hours the team were deployed into Evesham to assist paramedics and the RAF helicopter to deliver medication to some of those who had stayed to sit out the floods.

Group Manager Paul Gibson was among them. He said: "We were then sent to rescue a middle-aged man from his house. We were coming back from that when we came across a man stuck in the water up to his chest. He was extremely lucky. He thought he was able to wade through but got himself into serious difficulty and was about to be pulled into the river when we found him."





"We were one of the only teams capable of operating in the dark because of our training and equipment."

It was the start of a busy weekend that saw the team rescue 24 people and one animal, searching the fast flowing rivers for casualties and delivering vital supplies to trapped residents.

Paul Gibson added. "We were one of the only teams capable of operating in the dark because of our training and equipment."

Watch Manager Nick Searle was on the second team who responded to Worcestershire to relieve the initial Merseyside crew. He said: "We were tasked with checking the caravan parks on the River Avon surrounding Evesham to make sure no one was inside the caravans. When we arrived at the sites, they were all under water. There should have been 70-100 caravans but there were between 40-50 left as the rest had gone down river and disappeared. We checked and labelled every caravan but fortunately there was no-one left there. We did come across some people in their long boats who had been sitting it out, so we were able to give them reassurance and make sure they were OK."

"Going through Evesham was amazing. We know the area from when we go to the training college but it was hardly recognisable. The river is normally 25 metres wide but when we got there it was around 400 metres wide! We didn't know where the river started or finished. It made the water full of hazards, not only from overturned boats and other vehicles but fences and trees from the fields – at one point we were travelling where we thought the river was and it was actually a children's playground."

"In parts it was quite dangerous because of the speed of the water and because we didn't know what was under the water. All the locks had over run and if we had gone into them we could have got dragged under."

As the crews battled with the floods in Worcestershire another team was helping the community get prepared in Reading.

Station Manager Colin Murphy said: "We were put on stand by in case there was a flood so we went out into the community to look at particular markers on the water, speaking to local residents and even laying sandbags for them. Whilst we were out during one of these visits we came across a house that was completely encircled by water. We knocked on the door and the occupant was an 82-year-old woman with mobility problems. We had a chat with her and contacted her daughter. We ended up carrying the woman across the water to her daughter's car so she could get to safety."

The flooding in Worcester and Gloucester came just weeks after the East coast and South Yorkshire suffered record levels of rainfall. Merseyside's firefighters were called to Rotherham, Humberside, Scunthorpe and Doncaster to help deal with flash

Continued overleaf...

flooding.

High Volume Pumps from Merseyside were needed to pump large amounts of static water from flooded areas to relieve pressure on structures such as reservoirs and protect local amenities such as electricity substations and treatment plants.

The initial team took the High Volume Pump and its associated equipment to Rotherham where they were involved in pumping out water from Ulley Reservoir to allow essential repair work to be carried out on the dam. Collectively firefighters at the scene were pumping out around 8.5 million litres of water per hour.

Station Manager Steve Allwood was among the crew: "The bank of the reservoir was in danger of collapse so we were reducing the level by two metres to ease the pressure. There were 12 high volume pumps deployed there from all over the country."

As the threat subsided, the team returned back to Merseyside but just days later Steve Allwood was on his way to Humberside, this time with a different crew who worked through the night in Humberside.

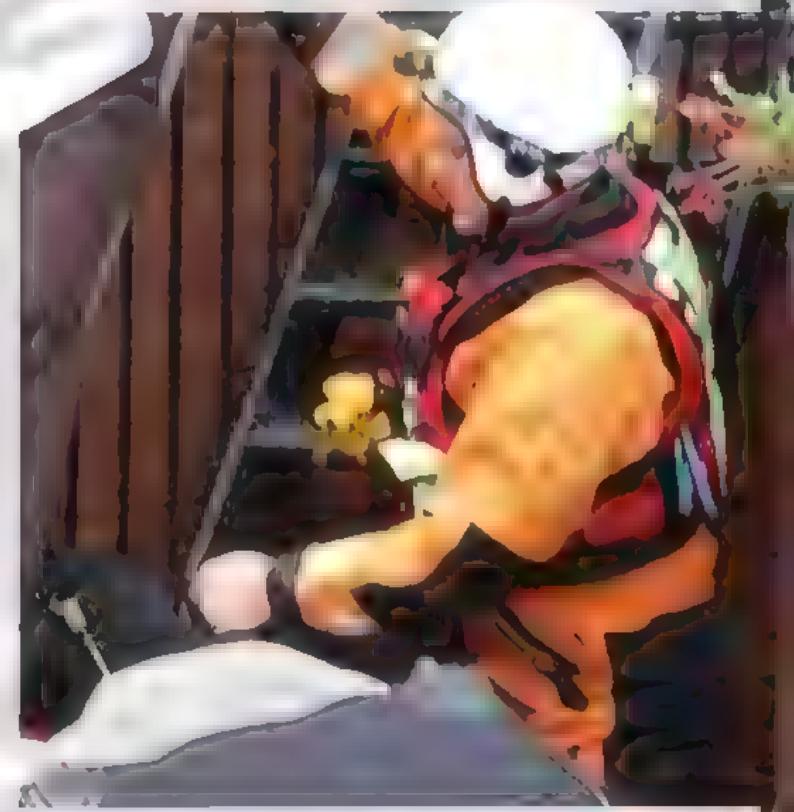
They included Station Manager Rob Taylor who said: "There was a lot of flood water in the low lying regions and the fire crews were pumping out water from the residential areas. The ground was saturated and houses were under 3-4 feet of water. There were eight high volume pumps in operation, one of them was ours."

The high volume pump was also called for in Doncaster as the Don burst its banks, flooding homes in the adjacent residential areas. Station Manager Rob Pritchard said: "Originally we were asked to just drop off equipment but we arrived in the thick of it and just got stuck in helping. We were laying mile after mile

of hose. The homes were all under water there and there was a multi-agency operation going on to rescue local residents and try and ease the situation. As we left the actions of all those involved were having a positive effect with water levels in the Don reducing."

Firefighters from Croxteth and the River Rescue Team were requested to take the boat to Humberside where homes and cars were immersed in the flood water. Although initially called to the Scunthorpe area they were deployed to various areas of Humberside.

Group Manager Paul Gibson was at the scene. He said. "The area had been devastated by the floods. The water was quite deep in places – we arrived on the Saturday afternoon but even as late as Sunday evening the water was chest deep.



Teams Who Responded

Rotherham

Steve Allwood, Dave Balmer, Keith Hill, Allan Jones, Roger Turner, Dave Chapman, Graham Gerrie and Euan Hurst

Humberside

Steve Allwood, Rob Taylor, Brian Cassidy, Dave Evans, Mike Muskett and Adrian Deeley

Doncaster

Mike Muskett, Allan Jones and Rob Pritchard

Scunthorpe

Group Manager Paul Gibson, Paul Hitchen, Tony Brown, Steve Wildman, John Lloyd Young and Gerry Aykurst

Worcestershire

Team 1: Paul Gibson, Paul Hitchen, Ben Ryder, Alistair Knowles, Steve Wildman and Paul Clarkson

Team 2: Martin Goodwin, Nick Searle, Gary Leith, Steve Hancock, Glenn Howe and Mark Harding

Berkshire

Colin Murphy, John Baker, Tony Brown, Pete Marnock, Ron Duffy and John Lloyd Young

Chain Gang in the Hot Seat

Merseyside Fire & Rescue played host to not just one but seven former Mayoresses! A special event was held by Sefton's outgoing Mayoress Jean Lilley who had invited along the former Mayoresses (affectionately known as the redundant chain gang!) from across the North West to the Town Hall. She said: "We were all in office last year so I organised a get together for us all and I wanted to do something a bit different." She contacted MF&RS to see how she could arrange a ride in a fire engine. Two engines duly turned up at the Town Hall to whisk them off for a short ride around the resort. Station Manager James Berry and Crew Manager Bill Shepherd were the chauffeurs for the afternoon and the crew from Southport attended to wave them all off.

Jean said: "It was a lovely surprise for them all. They all really enjoyed it and it topped off the afternoon for us all. Thank you to everyone involved."



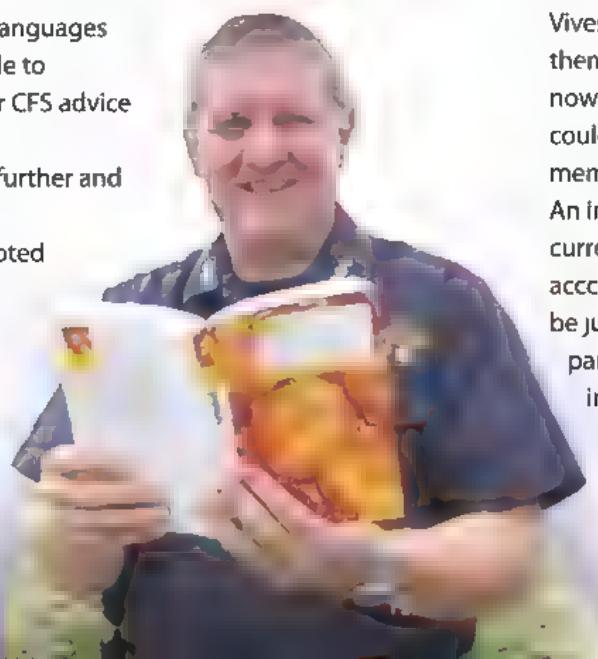
An influx of Polish migrant workers in Southport has sparked Station Manager Martin Goodwin into action.

Martin wanted to ensure he could communicate properly with them so he has taken it upon himself to start Polish lessons. He explained: "I went to a property in Southport where we had been having some problems but the people who answered the door couldn't speak English and I came away feeling very unhappy that we couldn't communicate more effectively with them."

Martin found that many people understood French so he started taking night classes in French and he has now achieved nine credits at Level One in the Merseyside Languages Programme. This means he is able to converse in French and also offer CFS advice and book appointments.

But now he is taking it one step further and has started learning Polish.

"I wanted to become more accepted in this community. I am paying for the lessons myself and it's been really useful. When I meet Polish people and speak a few words of Polish, they are a bit taken aback that I have taken the trouble to learn their language."



Southport Community Fire Station could soon be housing an internet cafe in a bid to build up links with the minority communities in the town.

A large number of migrant workers live in the resort, particularly from Eastern Europe and Africa, as many work in the service industry or the agricultural industry of West Lancashire. Nationalities in the town now include Polish, Namibian, Somali, Zimbabwe, Czech, Portuguese, Latvian and Slovakian.

For many the key way of communicating regularly with their friends and family is via email and the Vivesco Cafe in the town centre was well attended by them until it closed recently. A feasibility study has now been completed to see if Southport Fire Station could be a suitable location for an internet cafe where members of the community can meet.

An initial proposal is looking at using an office currently being used by Fire Safety, as it has disabled access and an accessible toilet. It is hoped this could be just the start of developing new links with this particular sector of the community. Other plans

include the possibility of minority communities becoming volunteers and a number have already expressed an interest in getting involved with the Fire Support Network.

Water Skills Training Launched

Merseyside is at the forefront of developing the country's first water rescue and flood response training centre.

Crews from stations with deep still water risks have been the first to undertake training in water rescue techniques. The two-day course develops firefighters as still water responders. This includes learning about water entry to carry out rescues, how to use PPE such as life suits, buoyancy aids and throw lines and new swimming and survival techniques in the water.

The course is delivered by Merseyside's own uniformed staff who have been trained as trainers. A team from the Search and Rescue and River Rescue teams (Paul Hitchen; Paul Clarkson; Ben Ryder; John Baker; Keith Williams; and Ian Wooldridge) put themselves forward for the development opportunity.

They use the Liverpool Water Sports Centre, in the Brunswick dock area, to carry out demonstrations, assessments and rescue scenario exercises. The idea is that if crews come across a situation in deep still water where life is at risk and all other methods have failed, they will have the training to enter the water. And training is constantly being developed, even for the trainers, with real-time scenarios created in the dock from river rescues using jet skis and rigid inflatable boats (with slide rafts) to urban flood rescues and incidents involving vehicles immersed in water.

So far crews at Kirkdale; Birkenhead; Wallasey; West Kirby; Heswall; Bromborough, Toxteth; Speke/Garston; Liverpool City; Eccleston; Croxteth; Southport and Crosby have completed the in-house course, so they can be on the run as still water rescue stations.

And the new knowledge has already been put to the test at emergency

incidents. One of the local incidents involved Liverpool City who were called to a boat that had sunk in the dock. The crew was able to enter the water and carry out a search to see if anyone may have been on the boat, using skills taught on the course.

But the benefits of this new training stretches much further than just Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. A partnership has been established with VT Critical Services. VT owns and operates two fire training centres in the UK - Severn Park Fire and Rescue Training Centre near Bristol and Cardiff Gate Training and Development Centre in Wales. The partnership led to the introduction of the International Waterskills Centre in Mersey Dock, the first centre of its kind in the UK. The state-of-the-art facility is designed not only to meet the training needs of the modern fire and rescue service, but also the public sector and business community.

It has the capacity to equip emergency service staff with basic, still-water rescue knowledge through to swift water technicians. It can also train the trainers particularly in advance water rescue, and has links with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) water rescue units and trainers based in Texas, USA and Europe.

And the need for such a training facility has never been so evident, with high profile natural disasters across the country including the recent floodings

In fact it was earlier water-related incidents that sparked Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service to reassess its water training. Locally there have been an increasing number of water incidents involving everything from pleasure craft to vehicles immersed in water. And nationally fire services were sent to neighbouring services to help larger

scale incidents such as Boscastle and Carlisle floodings.

Group Manager Paul Gibson has been working with VT to set up the training facility. He was among the staff from Merseyside who went to Carlisle in 2005 when three natural weather systems met in the North West of England, causing three rivers to burst their banks and left rescue teams virtually unprepared for the level of flooding that engulfed the area. Firefighters and emergency service workers were forced to improvise the rescue of people trapped by rising water, using whatever equipment they could find at the scene, highlighting the need for dedicated flood and water Fire and Rescue teams across the country.

Paul Gibson explained: "Many of the rescues we performed involved the extraction of people from the upper floor windows of residential properties which were difficult to reach. We were obstructed by submerged cars in the roads, garden gates, fences and brick walls, making it impossible to use any form of propeller-powered boat or rigid inflatable.

"Our training prepared us to a point, but it meant that the team was constantly adapting the ways in which they were working. Rescue teams from the emergency services on site informed each other on any new methods that worked as we progressed."

Technical rescue skills learned in Carlisle have evolved and become part of the training courses and daily operating procedures at the International Waterskills Centre. The training centre now offers courses in everything from Water Rescue Technician and Proactive Community Water Skills to National Powerboat and Rescue Slide Raft Operator.



And alongside the training offered in Liverpool, a new partnership has been created with JJs in Llangollen so that MF&RS and VT can use a canoe centre on a fast flowing river in Wales to develop swift water rescue.

Chris Braithwaite, VT Critical Services Business Manager, said: "VTS has worked with Merseyside Fire & Rescue since 2006 to establish training needs of firefighters and trainers at The International Waterskills Centre. Our role in the partnership incorporates the research and development of fire and rescue simulators, to the contract management of fire and rescue outsourced training. This also includes management of the facilities of the centre along with fire training course design and development to the procurement of any fire and rescue training equipment the team may need both on a daily and annual basis."

The new International Water Skills Training Centre was officially launched at the national Fire Exhibition in Birmingham. Practical demonstrations were held on the lake at the back of the NEC which captured the attention of visitors to the exhibition and ITN who filmed the team for their evening broadcast.

The first training for external organisations has already taken place – including Cheshire F&RS, Cumbria F&RS and Glasgow Airport Fire Service. Since the exhibition and also since the floods that hit the country recently, there has been interest expressed from Fire and Rescue Services across the UK

Over the next two years, the partnership is planning to develop a new range of urban flood response courses, and expand the swift water rescue training centre in North Wales.

Paul Gibson added: "The water incidents that have faced the UK in recent years have taught us that we need each member of our team to be ready for anything. Fire and rescue services in the UK are reacting to the growing need for water safety and flood response training so they can deploy experienced and knowledgeable staff in the field. This is an exciting new area that we are expanding into and it's fantastic that MF&RS are at the forefront of developing this."

Student Safety Highlighted

Fire safety amongst students has once again been highlighted following a rescue at Liverpool University's Capital Gate accommodation.

Three crews from Liverpool City Centre and Low Hill were called to the incident, on Daulby Lane, after a fire broke out in an electrical fuse box in a corridor on the fourth floor.

A 22-year-old woman was rescued, after she became trapped by the fire in a communal kitchen at the top of the corridor. Crews led her to safety where she was treated for severe smoke inhalation. Watch Manager Ben Ryder said: "We had three appliances at the incident within minutes of the call. Everyone worked as a team from our staff in MACC to the BA crews. I have no doubt in my mind

the young lady rescued owes her life to the professionalism and fast action of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service."

MF&RS are now hoping the rescued female will speak to other students to stress the importance of fire awareness and help combat some of the fire-related anti-social behaviour problems the service currently faces from students in the city.

The Service is working closely with student hall management and assisting in enforcing tenancy agreements in relation to fire safety. Issues that are being faced include wedging open fire doors that affect the safety and egress from a building (as was highlighted in this particular incident) and instigating false alarms that carries a hefty fine and imprisonment.

Students who make malicious calls to the Fire Service will be served with a fixed penalty, fined by the accommodation provider or even evicted; referred to the university for disciplinary proceedings which could also see them expelled; and they may have to cover the cost of the appliances who respond to the call - in some cases this could be up to £1,000. Terry Clarry, Response Rider for the City Centre, said: "We are hoping to get it through to students who instigate calls from automatic fire alarms that they are putting themselves in danger, disrupting others and abusing a system designed to save life in the event of a fire. We need to ensure students in our city know that they are welcome and we consider their safety a priority but anything that endangers lives will be dealt with appropriately"

Table of Ops Incidents: 1 May - 31 July 07

Station Ground	Total Fire Calls	FDRI Fires	Class S Fires	AFA's	Hoax Calls	Special Services	RTC's	HFSC's
Kirkdale	254	76	178	70	8	25	5	974
City	78	46	32	218	21	50	7	1074
Low Hill	269	93	176	73	23	40	6	1550
Wavertree	246	59	187	59	8	19	12	1269
Woolton	64	21	43	27	4	14	12	777
Huyton	168	56	112	20	14	26	13	628
Wormleighton	80	27	53	48	2	17	5	666
Woolton	94	38	56	53	6	12	6	627
Wavertree	147	60	87	35	6	24	5	1200
Woolton	162	34	128	49	5	22	11	1186
Woolton	113	36	77	63	13	20	8	670
Woolton	191	58	133	35	8	22	7	812
Woolton	129	53	76	61	10	27	6	1311
Formby	16	7	9	12	0	6	5	713
Formby	107	49	57	90	3	30	20	1417
Formby	60	20	40	41	6	26	8	633
Formby	150	52	97	43	6	27	16	1146
Formby	158	56	102	60	9	25	2	1021
Formby	192	74	118	60	12	78	14	1133
Formby	130	52	78	31	4	13	7	730
Formby	181	64	117	61	13	35	12	1173
Formby	70	27	43	43	7	12	9	1192
Formby	13	7	6	11	0	9	8	750
Formby	103	38	64	49	2	27	8	694
West Kirkby	26	7	19	10	1	9	4	557
West Kirkby	151	40	111	57	2	31	12	1202
Total	3352	1150	2199	1379	193	646	228	25105

T&DA's Window to World

The Training and Development Academy has gone into cyberspace with its very own dedicated website - www.merseyfire-tda.co.uk

The task of co-ordinating the development of the website was given to Crew Manager Bill Shepherd last year and the website has taken 12 months, from the initial idea to completion. The brief for the website was to deliver a dynamic site that was both informative and easy to use.

One of the unique features is the ability to take a virtual tour of key areas within the Academy, this is the first time this technology has been used within a Fire Service website - click and try!

John McNeill, Manager of the Academy, said: "Now we can reach a much greater number of people both from within the F&RS and the community at large. As well as our commitment to providing the very best Training & Development for MF&RS, we are constantly striving to increase our links with other Fire & Rescue Services locally, nationally and internationally as well as with commercial and community based organisations.

"New challenges face us all the time and as a training establishment we must be fully prepared to meet these challenges. The site will be instrumental in helping us achieve this and we will continue to develop it to meet the needs of all our stakeholders."



New Technology

As you will all be aware, MF&RS embraces all types of new technology. This is most obvious when personnel come to the training academy for initial input on the new Drager BA sets which incorporate the Bodyguard telemetry system. When and if new technology becomes available the system has the ability to be updated allowing for even greater health and safety for the users.

The Training and Development Academy has just started the second phase of training. This takes the form of a half day refamiliarisation on the use of the sets plus a practical exercise where both the BA sets and Merlin boards are used.

There has been a high level of acceptance of the new sets from personnel, with most remarking on how comfortable the sets are to wear. The telemetry equipment, which consists of the Bodyguard II distress signal unit and the Merlin board, has been used successfully for several years in other brigades with all reporting excellent reliability.

The T&DA are looking to roll the system out on to stations within the next three months.

New PPV Fans

To enhance the effectiveness of Positive Pressure Attack (PPA), replacement positive pressure fans have been purchased and will initially be deployed to stations trained in the use of PPA. Following extensive trials the Leader Groupe MT 236 Turboventilator PPV fan was chosen as the most effective PPV fan available. Combining the use of a turbine with the concept of positive pressure ventilation creates a concentrated air jet with a high initial velocity which produces a large volume of entrained air. This, in addition to the initial flow, gives the final total ventilation flow. This technique makes the highest coefficient of entrained air possible. Unlike traditional positive pressure ventilators, the turbine ventilator does not require an air joint around the opening to be ventilated. The turboventilator jet is simply directed towards the opening in order to allow the additional air surge into the area to be ventilated. This technique allows for the movement of up to 36,000 cubic metres of air per hour.

New Partnership Brings in 15,000 HFSCs

Thousands of vulnerable residents in Wirral are set to be made safer in their homes in a unique partnership between MF&RS and Wirral Council. Watch Manager Haydn Lipscombe from CFS has spent the last 18 months working alongside Wirral Adult Social Services to find a way of the Service contacting people who have not received a Home Fire Safety Check. Social Services have contact with many sections of the community who are more susceptible to die or be injured in a fire in their home – including the elderly and people with mobility problems.

Haydn explains why the partnership is so important: "Whilst I was working in Wirral Fire Safety two people sadly lost their lives in fires within a six month period. Both were in the high risk groups who we are trying to engage with yet tragically neither had been visited by the Fire Service. We needed to change this for the future and make sure that nobody else died in similar circumstances."

Despite being a logical idea, both services faced a mountain of legislation that needed to be overcome before sharing personal data. But now after ironing out various legal issues such as

Data Protection, the contact details of 15,000 people are to be passed over to MF&RS. Fire Service Direct will then be checking every name to see who has not been visited by firefighters for an HFSC. Residents will receive a letter from Wirral Council explaining this new partnership and giving them the option of having their name taken off the list if they don't want their details given to the Fire Service.

The HFSCs will initially be arranged for Heswall and West Kirby as the Fire Service works its way through the names.

Kirkdale target tenants

Blue Watch Kirkdale has been working with Riverside Housing to develop a new partnership that will make tenants safer in their homes. The new initiative will deliver thousands of names for HFSCs across the whole of Merseyside. The Watch were in the community thinking of ways they could increase the number of HFSCs among vulnerable tenants in their area when they realised how many properties fell under the ownership of Riverside Housing.

Watch Manager Dave Perrin explained: "We contacted the local Riverside office and asked whether there could be a way we could work together to improve fire safety in their tenants' homes. It has really snowballed from there. We have had meetings with various colleagues from Riverside and we were really surprised that some didn't even know about Home Fire Safety Checks. It's a win-win situation as we will be engaging

with some of the vulnerable residents in our station area and as a result Riverside will have safer housing."

The watch have also recently held a meeting with Regenda Housing Association to set up a similar partnership. The meeting, held at Kirkdale Community Fire Station coincided with a visit to the station by a local youth group. Dave Selby, Regenda Manager, also works as a co-ordinator for Youth Engagement. He is now looking to involve us in Youth Engagement activities through Regenda, helping to deliver the fire safety message to the younger people in the community.

Look what's in store!

Shoppers in Anfield, can pick up more than just their groceries when they visit the Asda store on Breck Road. The supermarket has just installed a new telephone where customers can arrange their HFSC on the spot for free! The phone is linked to Fire Service Direct at SHQ. The new scheme has been arranged by Firefighter Peter Boland who has been working with Asda to get the telephone installed. He explained: "This is one of the most vulnerable areas in Liverpool so it is one of our most high risk areas for fires. We have worked with this particular Asda store in the past as they have displayed our leaflets encouraging people to take up HFSCs but this is something new."



Eyes Down For CFS

Pauline Hildith got more than a full house on her latest visit to **Gala Bingo** in Kirkby! The Tower Hill resident received a special skin and beauty hamper and £20 worth of bingo vouchers after winning a free prize draw, organised as part of a new initiative by MF&RS.

Pauline and other bingo fanatics in the club were automatically entered into the draw when they signed up for a Home Fire Safety Check. Firefighter Stuart Rigby masterminded the initiative and is hoping to secure up to 2,000 referrals by visiting bingo halls across Merseyside. Under the new scheme every table in the hall will feature referral cards, allowing people to sign up for a HFSC.

The scheme was piloted in June and has been a great success, securing 450 referrals in just two weeks. Buckingham Bingo was the first to take part in the initiative where Stuart, who is the Team Leader of Knowsley After Fire Care with the Fire Support Network, attended seven different bingo sessions and secured 325 referrals, with 131 people signing up in just one night. Since then he has visited Gala In Kirkby and Mecca in Knotty Ash, securing a further 500 referrals.

Stuart will spend two weeks focusing on a particular bingo hall, attending six to eight different sessions, in a bid to reach as many different people as possible. Stuart then plans to revisit these halls approximately a year later, when he believes there will be a change in the clientele.

Stuart is highly motivated by this project and is clearly determined to make it a success, stressing the importance of making steps towards this high risk group. "Old people are the group at highest risk of fires and can also be hard to reach. But here is a group of them together where we can get access and start to breakdown barriers. This scheme gives us a great opportunity to get to people who don't have smoke alarms fitted and are part of the most high risk group."

The scheme is now going from strength to strength, and Stuart believes its success comes from having someone on hand to discuss the necessity of smoke alarms and fire safety: "Simply giving out leaflets or hanging up posters is very expensive and often not very effective as people can just ignore them. With this scheme there is someone to talk to them and encourage them to sign up."

Stuart now plans to visit all the bingo halls across Merseyside, before beginning the cycle again, and is already making plans for the future of the scheme: "Once the main bingo halls have been exhausted, there could be an opportunity to get more referrals from church halls, social clubs, community centres and other organisations who hold regular meetings or bingo sessions or fundraising events."



Stations Links with Local Youths

Although youth engagement work has mushroomed within MF&RS, links between fire stations and young people in the area have been developed over many years and the work is still continuing.

And whilst much work is done as diversionary activities or to prevent anti-social behaviour, a lot of work is being done with the 'good kids' too. It's something the firefighters at Kirkdale are particularly proud of and rightly so! They have formed partnerships with a number of youth groups in the area who are now regular visitors to the station.

These include St John Ambulance, PSS

(a group for young carers) and Christ Church in Bootle where young people take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

Firefighter Jimmy Simpson, from Blue Watch, said: "We have had various youth groups on station and through the years we have had contact with hundreds of young people, many still keep in touch. They all enjoy coming to station and it's our way of giving something back to the community. But it helps us too, as the young people help us to generate HFSCs – they do everything from designing posters about HFSCs to actually getting referrals from family and friends."



The most established partnership has been with St John Ambulance, where for the last 10 years young people have visited the station to complete their fire safety proficiency. Some of those who once came as cadets are now youth leaders and are returning to the station with the latest recruits! Natalie Evans was a cadet with St John and is now a Divisional Officer. She said: "I was one of the first groups to go. We have a very strong relationship

with the firefighters there, particularly Jimmy and Keith. It is a brilliant course to do. It's not just about fire but about looking after yourself and those around you. Everyone jumps at the chance to do the fire proficiency. We go to the station, see the fire trucks, they even dress us up in fire kit. It's very practical which makes it a lot of fun."

EXCLUSIVE MF&RS STAFF OFFER

Napton Narrowboats and Minervois Cruisers are offering exclusive discounts to all MF&RS staff on their delightful canal-boat holidays in both Britain and the sunny south of France. Napton are based in Southam, Warwickshire and at Auderley Junction on the Shropshire Union Canal while Minervois is based at Le Somail, South France.

So if you fancy a canal-boating holiday this October, ring the contact telephone numbers below and quote 'Mersey Fire & Rescue Offer' to obtain a 25% discount for 1 week, or a 30% discount on your holiday

For a French canal-boat holiday, courtesy of Minervois Cruisers, contact them at: www.minervoiscruisers.com or call: 01926 – 811842

For a UK canal-boat holiday, contact Napton Narrowboats at: www.napton-marina.co.uk or call 01926 813644



New Van That's Just Cool!

A new appliance has been added to the ever increasing fleet of vehicles, with the introduction of a new 'Cool Van' to help preserve the welfare of firefighters. The new vehicle will respond to major incidents, exercises or any incident where the welfare of firefighters may be compromised due to the effects of heat stress. Its primary role is to provide rest and recuperation facilities enhanced by specific equipment designed to reduce the body core temperature of firefighters, as well offering protection from environmental conditions.

Although this type of rehab vehicle is standard in America, nothing like it existed in the UK, so Transport Manager Dave Martin and Watch Manager Alan Moore developed and built the first. Dave Martin said, "The Cool Van has been produced to ensure firefighter welfare is being looked after and closely monitored. The van provides the necessary facilities to ensure firefighters can have the facility to recuperate after undertaking arduous activities at major incidents."

The Cool Van will attend any ongoing incidents or exercises and can be used for long periods of time to ensure the welfare of firefighters is not compromised throughout an incident. It is equipped with sufficient supplies of bottled water, energy bars/gels, hot food packs, electrolyte drink enhancements and is fitted with a hot water heater for providing hot drinks and soups. The van also contains a mass oxygen multilayer which provides oxygen to several people simultaneously, a defibrillator, a pulse oximeter, a blood pressure monitoring device, eye wash station, hand cleaning facilities and a resuscitator to supplement its first aid kit.

A Positive

Pressure Fan with a misting adaptor has been provided and will shortly be supported with a VersaMist fan imported from America. These items will create a 'cool area' ideal for outdoor firefighting during hot spells. The vehicle inventory also includes cool vests, blankets, portable lighting, tables, chairs, spare clothing items, satellite navigation, cool box, portable silenced 110/240v generator and a water filter.

The van also contains a portable air shelter, which can hold up to 20 people and is inflated by an electric pump fitted inside the van, as well as featuring a 3m awning and full side curtains, which allows firefighters to take shelter from any environmental conditions.

One of the new features the van includes is the introduction of Kore Kooler Rehab Chairs, specially ordered from America and a first for British firefighters. The chairs are designed to allow Firefighters to immerse their forearms in water. Research by the Royal Navy, DRDC (Defence, Research & Development) Canada and intensive tests carried out by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service in conjunction with John Moores University have shown that this forearm immersion is the most effective method of reducing body core temperature, ensuring that Firefighters can continue to work safely, particularly when combined with other rehabilitation methods.

Watch Manager Alan Moore was responsible for the procurement of every item of equipment carried by the van. He saw his ideas turned into a reality with the help of the service's workshops and he says: "Without doubt they exceeded all my expectations with the quality of work that has been produced."



Looking Back A trip down Memory Lane

These photos are from March 1985 when crews were called to Buchanan Mills, on Dock Rd, Wallasey.

Crews were called at 9.40am and arrived to find the 4th, 5th, 6th floors and roofspace involved in a fire. Six pumps and four special appliances were called to the scene - two turntable ladders, a hydraulic platform and an emergency tender control unit.

The extent of the blaze was so severe it caused the roof to collapse onto smouldering grain. This led to it being a prolonged job for the firefighters as they spent several weeks at the scene extinguishing all the pockets of fire.

Barry McDonald has now retired but he was a firefighter at Hatton Garden at the time of the fire. He recalls: "Wallasey attended initially and they got back-up from Liverpool. It was well alright when we arrived and it was a massive building. Because of the type of building it was, all the timber inside was soaked in oil from the seed over the years so the fire really took hold."

"I attended on the make pumps seven and when we got to the scene, our crew's job was to set up a bridge head in the next mill on the gantry adjoining the mill that was on fire which prevented the fire spreading across the gantry."

"I remember we heard this loud bang at the other end of the gantry - it was one of the walls collapsing. It collapsed on Wallasey's Turntable Ladder and the old CFO Ernest Buschenfeld drove the vehicle clear even while debris was still falling. They were very lucky really."



The Barn - S3

For the younger members, the City of Liverpool Fire Service manned the Airport until the Civil Aviation Authority took it back under its wing.

These tales will not be 100% correct and a little author's poetic licence has been used, and why not?

I was sentenced to an undetermined time at The Barn in 1973, a fresh faced "sprog", of 24 years, and having spent a short time at Banks Road, after my recruit course. I was met by the sight of Eddie Williams taking a seagull (with broken wing) for its early morning exercise attached to a dog lead. The watch (Red) then, if memory serves me well was; Sid Morton, Roy Farnyhough, John "Pardoe" Matthews, Kenny James, Frankie Mangan, Ronnie Godwin, Ernie Williams, Joe Southern, with later additions of Jim Kearney, Eric Bailey, Charlie Garner, Billy Halpin and Chris Melia

Here are my memories of one of the humourous events to have graced our time! We had a visit from the Council Airport Committee, including the formidable Doreen Jones.

Jim Kearney was the Boss at the time and wanted the watch to look its best. "Pardoe" decided he would be stick man. At that time the shoe issue was the old Oxford toe-cap type.

He decided to improve on the Cherry Blossom black shoe polish shine, he gave his shoes a coat of Crown Plus 2 black gloss paint!!

Needless to say, Jim's eye-sight was not 20/20 and he asked Pardoe did he have any more polish for the rest of the watch. The Committee arrived on board the old Commer personnel carrier and the inspection went very well.

All councillors were greatly impressed with the new "Pathfinder" appliance, especially its size, with its steering wheel in the centre of the consol/dashboard.

The Brigade Order at the time demanded that two people had to assist the driver when reversing.

If my memory is correct, Kenny James was the designated driver on the day, but Billy Halpin decided he would look better reversing the Pathfinder into the appliance room.

Jim Kearney was renown for chewing his false palate. As Billy reversed, straight over the personnel carrier, he almost swallowed them!!

We, to a man, did all we could to keep our faces straight and I'm certain we ran out of FS18s & 19s that day!

The Wing Commander

Ex-members News

The Ex-members Association continues to grow with success, with monthly meetings now pulling in around 100 people. The atmosphere is superb. One of the newest attendees is Jim Brown, ex-Lancs County and Newton-le-Willows, who has only recently joined the codgers. Although he is in his 70s, Jim is computer literate and is enjoying his new found friends at the Vines.

Recent events for the Association have included a social evening in June that raised £500 for Willowbrooke Hospice, where Alan Thair was cared for in his hour of need.

Members can now catch up with each other and share old photos online, thanks to Tommy O'Brien who has introduced a

Fishing:

This season got underway on May 24 at Mill House Fisheries. Good fishing but due to the bigger fish indulging in a bit of nooky, the weights were a little under par. Brian Carson had the right idea in targeting the babies which produced an excellent net of rudd running 4 to the pound.

Results:

1st Brian Carson	25lb 5oz
2nd Dave Pye	16lb 9oz
3rd Charlie Horn	16lb 2oz

The 2nd meeting was held at Rosemary Wood, Haskayne, on June 14. Monsoon rains made us feel at home with the fish - extremely wet. Steve Blenkinsop was having a little trouble with his brolly and looked more like the Man from Atlantis with rain dripping from every orifice, but like true fishermen we moaned all day!

Results:

1st John Edwards	29lb 12oz
2nd Charlie Horn	21lb 9oz
3rd Dave Pye	20lb 11oz

Another rain soaked day, 12th July, the hardy or foolish fished at Orrell Lakes. After parking in the wrong place and forgetting his trolley and then asking Bob Tedford for the loan of his pacemaker, Ronny Craig finely made it to his peg.

Results:

1st Charlie Horn	27lb 1oz
2nd John Edwards	19lb 15oz
3rd Dave Pye	17lb

Members are always welcome, so if you like fishing come along we don't take the match too seriously but if you win make sure you can swim! Tight Lines.

Dave Pye

Codgers Forum. Log onto <http://codgers.8forumer.com/> and register your details. Anyone wanting regular emails from the Ex-members Association should give their details to Matty Melia by calling 01925 725738.

Ex members are eligible to take part in the World Firefighter Games in Liverpool next year, either as a competitor or volunteer. Find out the latest about WFG08 on page 27.

Here is a round-up of the activities of the Walking, Golf and Fishing Sections. Members are welcome at all the various sections events, so please get in touch if you are interested.

Walking:

Thanks to the stalwart efforts of Billy Catteral who continues to keep us on our toes and blisters. His use of maps, compass and GPS astounds us all, as even with all these aids we never know where we've been.

That only adds to the great pleasure enjoyed by all, getting away from the hustle and bustle of life accompanied by the odd slurp and nosh. Keep at it Bill.

Anyone wishing to join one of our jaunts please get in touch with Billy by emailing billycat@blueyonder.co.uk

Golf:

There has been a great change in the Ex-members Association. Several sections have been established, one of them being a very active golf section which plays at various venues. The second "Codgers" open returned to Eccleston Park Golf Club (Ronnie gets discount on his bacon butties!!) on May 17 with a very strong contingent of potential champs proving their worth in rather wet conditions to start. But the sun eventually came out, giving those with high scores an excuse, due to the rapidly speeding up greens. The winner this year was John Garity with Richie Pendleton and Roy Brigdon runners up.

The day was rounded off with an excellent meal, chicken curry and the hot putt was excellent, accompanied by the usual soft drinks!

New members are most welcome, including those riding horses, wearing Zorro masks, stetsons and chaps!!! For info contact Ron on 0151 280 5049, email ron.dot@blueyonder.co.uk or John Garrity at jon@heathfield4.fsn. Ron Croll, Golf Section Secretary

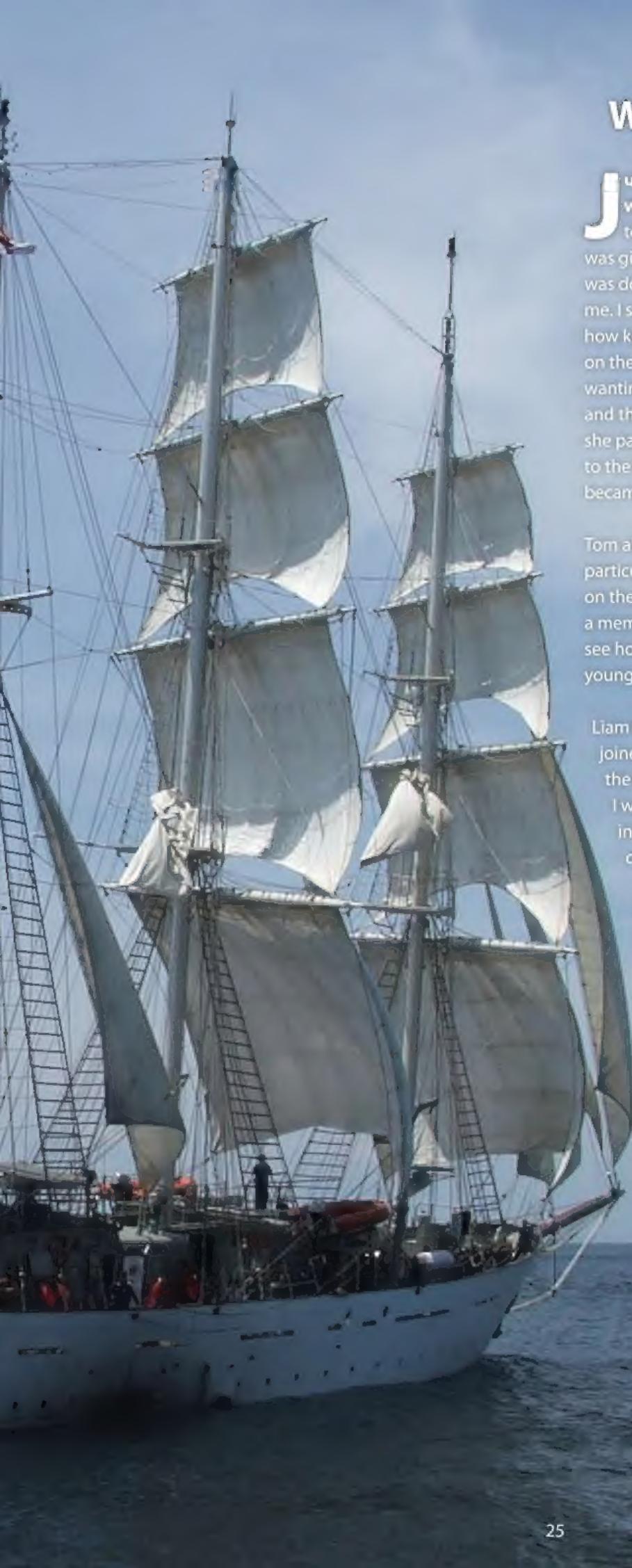
Life on The Ocean Wave

F

We were learning
We were helping
climbing mast
setting sails,
scrubbing the deck
- we *did everything*
and I loved it



Where are they from?



Just a few years ago Sarah was a wayward teenager who was close to being expelled. In a desperate bid to deter her from a life of anti-social behaviour, she was given a place on MF&RS' Beacon course. She said: "I was doing the Beacon one day a week and it really helped me. I saw what the firefighters did and they showed me how kids were towards them and what it was like to be on the receiving end. I came away from the course just wanting to help people. They all treated me with respect and they helped to change my attitude." Just months later, she passed seven GCSEs and two GNVQs. She returned to the Fire Service to do another youth scheme and then became a mentor for other young people.

Tom also started on the Beacon course. He said: "I wasn't particularly naughty but I was not the best. When I went on the Beacon I changed and I buckled down." He is now a member of the Croxteth Youth Team. "It's made me see how much firefighters do for the community and for young people."

Liam first got involved with the Fire Service when he joined the Prince's Trust course and he is now completing the EARLY programme. He said: "Before I got involved I was not doing much, just staying in bed or staying indoors. But all these things have given me more confidence and I want to be out doing things now."

Ursula was a pupil at Calderstones School which is one of the schools visited by Sarah Brosnan as part of the School Arson Liaison scheme. Sarah put Ursula forward for the trip in recognition of all the help Ursula has given her.



Wayne's World

Merseyside Fire and Rescue's first ever youth football team is celebrating after a flurry of success both on and off the pitch.

Dalewood under 13s became the first team to be sponsored by MF&RS and were launched under the new name of Mersey Fire Knowsley at the annual Knowsley International Youth Football Tournament in July. The team faced national and international opposition in the tournament and won the tournament, achieving some great victories along the way. They beat BSS Australia (Brazil Soccer School) 5 – 0 and winning against Senegal and Garswood in an amazing 13 – 1 victory.

Firefighter Wayne Woods, from Kirkby Community Fire Station, has been their manager for over five years and proposed the idea of the service sponsoring the team. He felt being sponsored by the service would give the players, who are from the Kirkby and Liverpool areas, a great sense of pride and honour at representing not only MF&RS but also Knowsley as a whole.

MF&RS provided the team with a brand new kit and the team adopted a Mersey Fire branding for many of the summer tournaments they took part in.

The team has reaped great rewards for their players, many of whom have attracted interest from premiership clubs. Five players have now signed with Tranmere and another two are on trial with Oldham Athletic.

Manager Wayne Woods is delighted for his players, but is now having to find new players to fill his team next season! He said: "I was approached after one of the games by scouts from Liverpool, Everton, Blackburn, Manchester United and Tranmere Rovers who asked could they give six of my players trials at their respective clubs. Tranmere were so impressed with the team, they have now signed up my centre forward on a two year contract."

The team were invited to both Liverpool FC and Tranmere Rovers training academies, with Liverpool inviting them to take part in a special match against a team of opponents who flew in from America. Wayne, who can hardly contain his pride at the success of the team, said: "I am extremely proud of the team and the way they have conducted themselves with the new responsibility they now carry, they have been a credit to themselves and to us."

MF&RS is now looking to sponsor a youth football team in each district across Merseyside.



A group of firefighters have swapped fire drills for coaching drills to complete a course to become grassroots community football coaches.

Uniformed and non-uniform staff Peter Matthews, Adam Peers, Peter Campbell, Kevin Conway, Andy Lenway, Keith Smith, Jimmy Maddock and Lee Taylor, Nick Rogan, Paul Crilly, Mike Quinn, Nick Mernock, Shaun Preston, Sharon Ewell and Stephen Maccabe – have taken part in a course to obtain their FA/McDonald's Level 1 coaching qualification.

The course was organised through McDonald's community football coaching programme which provides more access to qualified coaching for youngsters by offering individuals the opportunity to volunteer and qualify as football coaches. Dave Garry, Youth Activity Advocate, played a key part in organising this special 'fire-only' coaching course along with The Liverpool Football Association.



ONE YEAR TO GO!

World Firefighters Games

AToughest Firefighter Alive display has been staged on St George's Hall Plateau to mark exactly one year until Liverpool hosts the 10th World Firefighters Games.

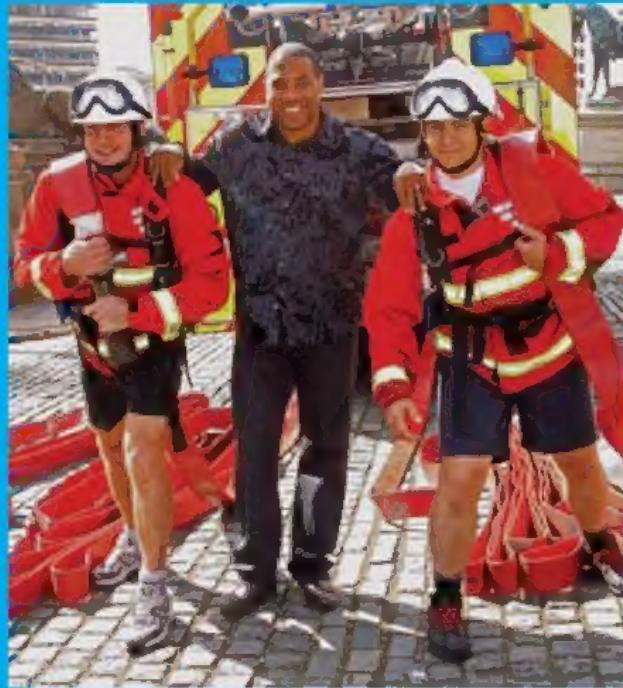
It is estimated that 5,000 firefighters from around the globe will arrive in the city for the 10-day WFG08 spectacle, which takes place between August 24 and September 2, 2008.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MF&RS) is delighted to be hosting the Games as its contribution towards Liverpool's European Capital of Culture celebrations.

WFG08 is offering an exciting programme of more than 70 different events including football, table tennis, boxing, golf, fishing, triathlon, dragon boat racing, track and field, chess and a Fire House Cook-off.

The blue ribbon event will be the Toughest Firefighter Alive (TFA) competition on St George's Hall Plateau. This stunning venue will be the setting where the competitors' strength and stamina will be tested to the very limit.

There are four elements to the competition, including a hose drag, obstacle course and weight carrying. The towering 450ft St John's Beacon, home to Radio City, will host the mammoth stair climb.



The taster event was held to highlight what the city can expect from next year's Games, and attracted radio and newspaper Press coverage. A group from MF&RS who competed in the Austrian TFA a week earlier were on-hand for the showcase.

John Baker and Lauren McCormack, from the search and rescue team, and WFG08 events director Guy Keen all did themselves proud in Siegendorf. They were joined for the demonstration by Gary Leith, also search and rescue, plus a small group of supportive colleagues.

Liverpool FC legend John Barnes even joined in the fun. The pundit took time out from filming on the Plateau to hear what WFG08 is all about and happily posed for photographs with the team.

Picture by Tony Thomas

Mersey team at Austrian TFA

Ateam of four Merseyside firefighters represented the UK at Austria's Toughest Firefighter Alive competition.

The event was held in Siegendorf, and attracted almost 100 participants.

The Mersey team was made up of Andy Sheehan, Lauren McCormack, John Baker and WFG08 Events Director Guy Keen, who all stepped up to the challenge. They were joined by Andy Wilds from Humberside and Stuart

Brereton from Bedfordshire and Luton. Taking part in a TFA came a year early for Stuart. He was the first person in the UK to register online for WFG08's TFA event, and in recognition he was offered a funded place to Austria.

He said: "When I registered I thought, 'I've got a year to get myself fit' – then I got the call inviting me to Austria. I'm very grateful for the opportunity."

In the weeks since registration went live, competitors have already signed

up to represent the countries of Australia, Germany, Poland, South Africa, America, Canada, France, Holland, Scotland, Thailand, The Netherlands and, of course, England. And events proving the most popular at this time include the TFA, triathlon, track and field, and swimming.

Look out for the full story in the next WFG08 newsletter.

Visit www.wfg08.com for a full events programme.



Registration for the World Firefighters Games 2008 is now open!

sign-up at: www.wfg08.com



Produced by Corporate Communications

Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle, Liverpool, L30 4YD.

Tel: 0151 296 4000 Fax: 0151 296 4333 Web: www.merseyfire.gov.uk



"An Excellent Authority"